

Babson Stable and Service Building
283 Gatesby Lane
Riverside
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-I068

HABS
ILL,
I6-RIVSI,
IA-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ILL-1068

BABSON STABLE AND SERVICE BUILDING

HABS

ILL,

16-RIVSI,

1A-

Location: 283 Gatesby Lane, Riverside, Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Otto J. Kroh (north wing) and Phillips H. Crofts
(south wing).

Present Use: Two family dwellings.

Statement of
Significance: The U-shaped complex of three buildings was designed in 1915 by the firm of Purcell and Elmslie for Henry B. Babson's estate in suburban Riverside. The buildings were intended to complement the large Babson house to the south (now destroyed) which had been designed in 1907 by Louis H. Sullivan, while Elmslie was still in his employ. Originally, servants' quarters, a garage, stables, greenhouse, and storage space were contained within these low, red-brown brick buildings. The entire complex is sheltered by broadly over-hanging gable roofs, while terraces and gardens extend from the wings into a central court, and out to the surrounding prairie landscape. There are many noteworthy decorative details, such as the leaded glass designs, the ornamental wooden spires (now removed), the lattice-work of the terraces, and the free-standing trellis constructions in the gable of the garage.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Lots 1 and 3 in Owner's Division of lots 1106-07 and the west half of lot 1108 in Block 25 in Riverside third Division in Sections 25 and 36-39-12; recorded March 6, 1872.

Following is an abstract of the complete chain of title recorded in Book 42E, pp. 241-42, 295, 305, in the Cook County Recorder's Office.

Henry B. Babson's acquisition of the deed for his estate in Riverside from Charles D. Boyles was recorded on February 20, 1908 (Document 4165420). Babson retained the entire plot until July 26, 1948, when it was sold to Harold M. Taylor and Robert R. Heideman (Document 1437076T). Heideman then subdivided lot 1107 into lots 1 and 2 on April 6, 1949 (Document 14527399); Taylor likewise subdivided the west half of 1108 on December 11, 1952 (Document 15530164).

Otto J. Kroh purchased lot 1 on September 5, 1963 (Document 18866193), while Phillips H. Crofts received lot 3 on August 21, 1963 (Document 18889978).

2. Date of erection: 1915-16; the surviving blueprints are dated December 24, 1915.
3. Architects: Purcell and Elmslie; William Gray Purcell (1880-1965) and George Grant Elmslie (1871-1952).
4. Original plan, construction, etc.: The blueprints found at the site indicate that decorative roundels were to be placed in the pediments of the gables with "painting by others" - - these were apparently unexecuted. The drawings also show a simpler leaded glass design that is rectilinear and without the present dart motif.

It has been suggested that the sculptured animal designs on the ends of the projecting beams of the pergola extensions were executed by Alfonso Iannelli.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Henry B. Babson had previously called upon Purcell and Elmslie in 1912 to design his building at 229 South Wabash, known as the Edison Shop. [See: The Western Architect, Vol. 19, No. 1 (January 1913), pp. 1-10.]

C. Bibliography:

Bassman, Herbert J. (ed.) Riverside Then and Now. Riverside, Illinois: 1936.

Background information on the suburb of Riverside.
Library of the Chicago Historical Society.

Blueprints of working drawings: "Service Buildings for Henry B. Babson, Riverside, Illinois. Elevations and Sections at scale of one quarter inch = one foot, December 24, 1915. Purcell and Elmslie, Architects, 663 Peoples Gas Building, Chicago, Illinois; 422 Auditorium Building, Minneapolis, Minnesota." These blueprints were found in the building by Mr. Otto J. Kroh who made them available to HABS. Because of their deteriorated condition it is hoped that they will be turned over to the Burnham Library of the Art Institute of Chicago for preservation and micro-filming.

Brooks, H. Allen. The Prairie School, The American Spirit in Midwest Residential Architecture, 1893-1916. Evanston, Illinois: Unpublished doctoral dissertation for the Department of Art, Northwestern University, June 1957.

pp. 128-129. pls. 105, 106. In addition, pp. 93-131 summarize the work of Purcell, Feick, and Elmslie.

Condit, Carl W. The Chicago School of Architecture. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964. p. 183.

Reference to Babson's commissioning of the Edison Shop.

Gebhard, David S. A Catalogue of the Exhibit of the Architectural Works and Projects of Purcell and Elmslie, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. March 7 - April 24, 1953.

_____. "Louis Sullivan and George Grant Elmslie," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. XIX (May 1960). pp. 62-68.

"Mahagony clock, sitting room, balcony, H. B. Babson, Riverside, Illinois; Purcell and Elmslie, architects," Western Architect, Vol. 22, No. 9 (July 1915). pls. 4-5.

Microfilm Roll 7, frames 65-71; Alterations for the Henry B. Babson house, Riverside, Illinois, Art Institute of Chicago. Reference to original Babson house by Sullivan.

"Two Unusual Houses by Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright," Architectural Record, Vol. 30 (October 1911). pp. 326-338. Sullivan's Babson house.

The Prairie School Review, Vol. II, No. 1.

An issue devoted to Purcell and Elmslie with articles by David Gebhard and photographs of the Babson Service Buildings.

Prepared by Larry J. Homolka
Historian
National Park Service
August 1965

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The U-shaped complex of three buildings was designed in 1915 by the firm of Purcell and Elmslie for Henry B. Babson's estate in suburban Riverside. The buildings were intended to complement the large Babson house to the south (now destroyed) which had been designed in 1907 by Louis H. Sullivan, while Elmslie was still in his employ. Originally, servants' quarters, a garage, stables, greenhouse, and storage space were contained within these low, red-brown brick buildings. The entire complex is sheltered

by broadly over-hanging gable roofs, while terraces and gardens extend from the wings into a central court, and out to the surrounding prairie landscape. There are many noteworthy decorative details, such as the leaded glass designs, the ornamental wooden spires (now removed), the lattice-work of the terraces, and the free-standing trellis constructions in the gable of the garage.

2. Condition of fabric: Excellent, but there are many interior alterations.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately 100' x 190', U-shaped, one story.
2. Foundations: Concrete.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: Rough textured, deep red roman brick walls; pedimented gable ends are plaster.
4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: The original entrance porches are at the east end of each wing (the doorway on the south unit is now bricked up); the originally screened porches at the north and south sides of each wing (opposite entrance porch) are now enclosed.
5. Chimneys: There is one chimney in each wing in the east portion (original servants' living rooms). There is one chimney in each wing in west portion (in service areas, the chimneys served to vent heating system).
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Original entrances - the east end on each wing is bricked up. The entrances opposite the garage (each wing) with leaded glass upper panels are unchanged. The entrances at the mid point of each wing, also with leaded glass panels, are unchanged.
 - b. Windows: All the windows are casement. The original windows have a leaded glass design. The new windows are clear glass.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable, asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: There is a plaster soffit and built-in gutters. The wooden cornice is at a 45° angle and painted brown.

- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Original towers near west end each wing have been removed.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: At east and west end (each had separate stairs) each wing for storage and mechanical equipment.
 - b. First floor: Houses (single family) each wing separated by garage. Extensively altered to serve as residence. Originally small servants' apartment east end each wing. South wing was for gardening. North wing for stables and carriages.
2. Stairways: Two stairways (east end and west end) each wing to basements, wood tread and rise between concrete walk.
3. Flooring: Originally quarry tile, now carpet and asphalt tile.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Originally tawny roman brick inside exterior walls with plaster ceiling and interior partitions. Now all plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Originally dark varnished walnut with full center panel. Interior doors had solid panel. Exterior doors had leaded glass; 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ " dark stained walnut trim originally.
6. Decorative features and trim: Decorative beam ends of trellis over each original entry porch. Decorative planter and light fixture over original entrance door to garage.
7. Notable Hardware: Original hardware was brass in geometric motif.
8. Lighting: Globes in soffit combined with planters over entrance to garage. Original elaborate globe.
9. Heating: Central. Similar roman brick fireplace in original livingroom of apartments (each end each wing) with plaster panel recessed in center of area above opening. Raised roman brick hearth and vertical roman brick lintel.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: Courtyard between wings

opens to east northeast. Structure is located in exclusive residential neighborhood. Originally part of large estate for Henry Babson with Maier House designed by Louis Sullivan.

2. Landscaping, walks and enclosures: A large circular pool with a surrounding garden is in the center of the courtyard. There is a greenhouse off the west end of the south wing.

Prepared by J. William Rudd
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
July 1965